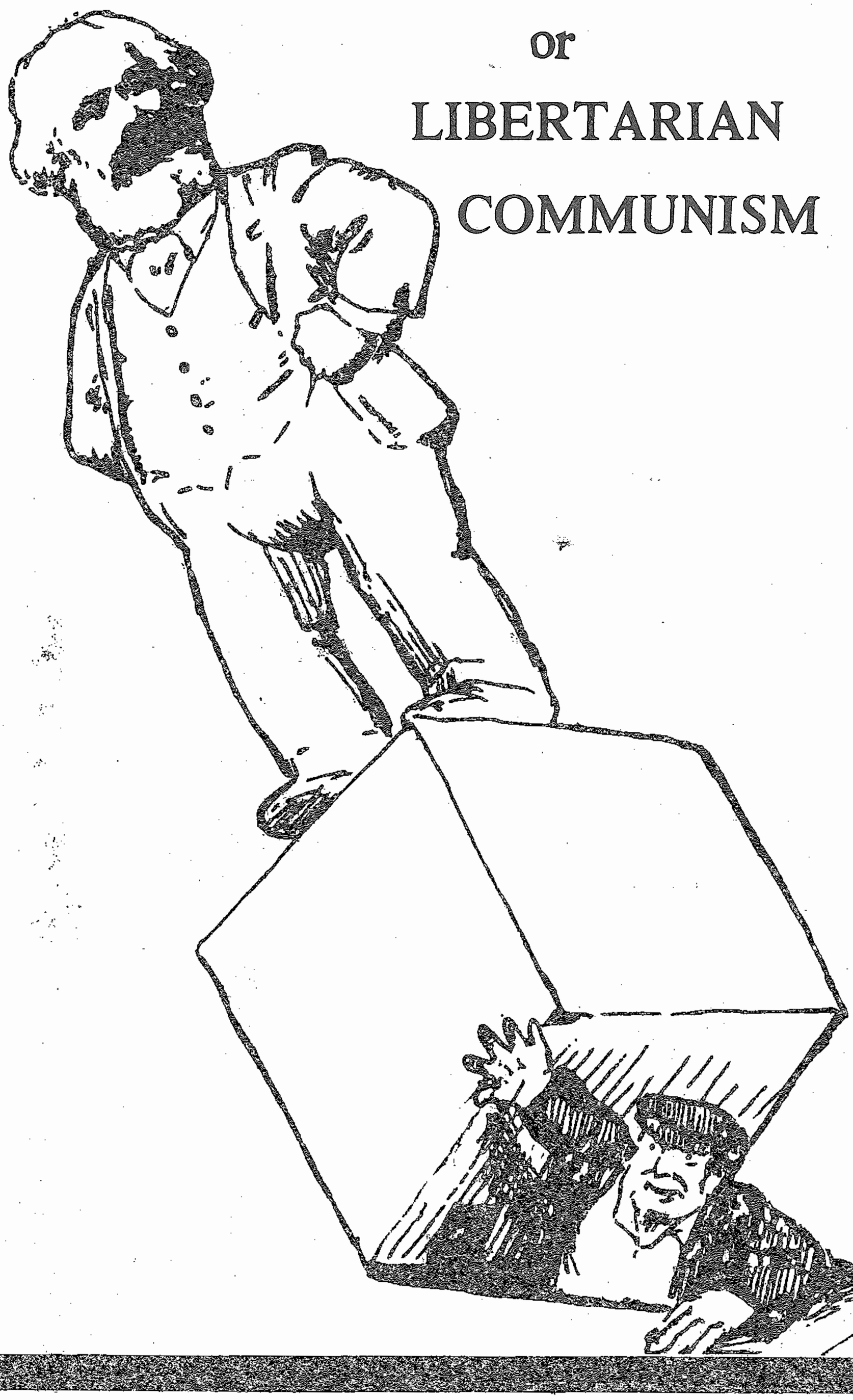
TRADITIONAL LEFTISM

or

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM



Traditional Leftism or Libertarian Communism

	Page Number
INTRODUCTION	1
THE MYSTERIOUS MISCONCEPTION OF HISTORY	1
THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND	4
VALUES IN THE THEORY OF VALUE	6
"FOLLOW ME"	8
HUMAN NATURE AND THEORY OF NEEDS	9
FROMM'S CONTRIBUTION	12
CONDITIONS AND BEHAVIOUR	14
SCIENTIFIC UTOPIANISM — SOCIALISM AS NATIONALIZATION PLUS RATIONALIZATION	18
THE MARX MENAGERIE??	23
LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST ORGANISATION AND ACTIVITY	27

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the views of our tendency in response to those presented in print and at the conference by the marxist tendency. We know that some individuals in this tendency do not call themselves marxists. However they have not presented in discussion arguments that differed from those of the avowed marxists. Another paper has been prepared which indicates our differences with those who have argued that the problem in the group lies in the authoritarianism or conservatism of some members.

The fundamental division with the tendency is over the nature of the revolutionary process and hence the problem of what constitutes revolutionary activity. The first concern of the paper therefore is to discuss marxist theory with a view to its ultimate influence on marxist strategy. The only claim of this section of the paper is that it is a selective discussion with this end in mind. The criticisms of marxism will allow presentation of elements of libertarian theory. Following from this the second concern of the paper will be to restate our committment to specifically libertarian revolutionary activity.

The Mysterious Misconception of History

The core of the grand theoretical scheme of marxism is the materialist conception of history best summarized by Marx in the Preface to the Critique of Political Economy. "The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or — what is but a legal expression for the same thing — with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. There begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic — in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out . . . . . No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed."

No qualifications or embellishments, no talk of "in the final analysis" and "ultimately", no dialectic or internal relations can cancel the fact that here Marx has created a dichotomy and chosen one element as primary. This remained the

"guiding thread" and passages can be brought forth (see 'Critique of Historical Materialism') to indicate that the class struggle is a subsidiary reflection of the economic base, that its course is determined by changes in the forces of production and that its result in revolution and the society thereby created is an inevitable ("inexorable", "same significance as the law of transformation of energy" etc) product of the level of development of these productive forces. The aims and consciousness of the proletariat do not determine the result but are determined.

"The question is not what this or that proletarian or even the whole of the proletariat at any moment considers as it aims. The question is what the proletariat is and what, consequently on that being, it will be compelled to do" (The Holy Family).

The Grundrisse is a fully mature work and actually broader in scope than Capital which came after it. Yet as McLellan notes (The Thought of Karl Marx P76) "It is noticeable that here, and throughout the Grundrisse, the agent of transformation — the revolutionary activity of the proletariat — is never alluded to". Class struggle is not the dynamic of history — the dynamic lies in the forces of production. The source of conflict is the oppostion which the existing relations of production put in the way of the forces of production which have developed production to the full within the present circumstances.

To appreciate the degree to which class struggle has been undermined it is necessary to ask two questions (Solidarity Vol 7 No 6) "Where does *change* in social being originate?" Answer "From *changes* in the material productive forces". Further question "Where do these *changes* in the material productive forces originate?" Marx never answered such a question but to maintain the materialist conception of history quoted above only one answer is possible and indeed the evidence for it exists, for example, in the statement in "The Poverty of Philosophy" "The hand-mill gives you society with the industrial capitalist". A change in the material forces of production is brought about by a technological invention. In the Grundrisse Marx develops an argument, which will be discussed later, about the end of capitalism wherein he says "To the degree that large-scale industry develops, the creation of real wealth comes to depend less on labor-time and on the quality of labor expended, and more on the power of the instruments which are set in motion during labor-time and whose powerful effectiveness itself is not related to the labor time immediately expended in their production, but depends rather on the general state of science and progress of technology".

Again change has come to consist of change in productive technique. If the matter could rest here then it would have to be conceded that in fact consciousness and class struggle are subject to the objective laws of economic production. However further questions arise. Why is a particular invention invested in by society? The Alexandrian Greeks invented a steam engine. Why was it not developed? Many spinning and weaving machines were invented in the Middle Ages but were destroyed. Why? Why was the hand-mill actively suppressed by feudal lords and replaced by the water-mill? In the quote above it can be seen that Marx includes, "the general state of science" in the productive forces. Indeed technical intelligence was of particular importance in Marx's analysis of the fall of capitalism. Why was this knowledge applied to develop, say, the factory system? Does the explanation lie in "the unlimited urge to accumulate" (Grundrisse), the profit motive, or in an urge by a class to sustain its power in society (or is it an accident)?

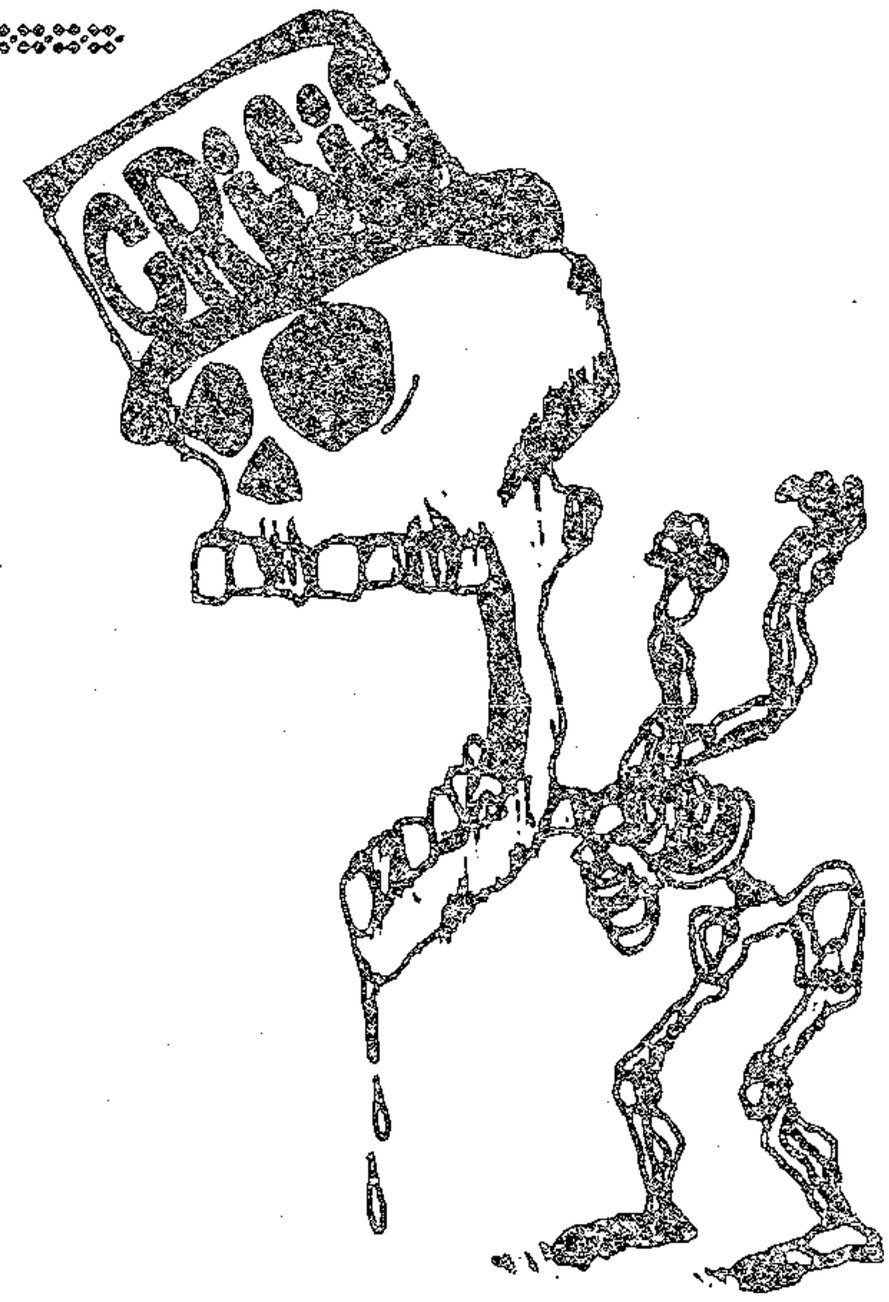
It is not hard to see that any of these answers (except accidents) immediately takes as into the realm of consciousness and historical materialism has to be stood

on its head or the dichotomy abandoned. Such a refutation of the "social being determines consciousness" theory would immediately send a shock wave through Marx's sociology, economics and history disrupting the objective validity and ineluctability of the laws and ending Marxism's special claims as a theory.

So as not to leave the above question without suggesting possible alternatives to Marx it is worth mentioning S. Marglin's article 'What Do Bosses Do?' (in the review of Radical Political Economics, 1974). Marglin indicates through a number of examples how social hierarchy shapes technology. He cites the search of the entrepreneur for an essential role in production by substituting for the worker's control of the work process, as the explanation for the development of the minute division of labour which broke up a system based on workers' control of their work. The social function of hierarchical control was to provide for the accumulation of capital. Once the boss had achieved a "justified" position in production as the integrator of the separated efforts of his workers he was able to act as a mediater between producer and consumer and set aside capital for accumulation whereas previously there was no mediation between production and consumption. The aim of the factory system was not efficiency but to divide and conquer the workers. Nor was the factory initiated because of the need of machines for power "Long before the power loom became practicable, handloom weavers were brought together into workshops to weave by the same techniques that were employed in cottage industry" The intention was discipline, control and regulation of output. Marglin shows that the steam mill did not give us the capitalist, the capitalist gave us the steam mill. He also shows that the handmill did not give us the feudal lord but that the feudal lord destroyed the handmill and gave us the watermill. He concludes "the primary determinant of basic choices with respect to the organisation of production has not been technology — exogenous and inexorable — but the exercise of power — endogenous and resistable." In "Historical Materialism Reconsidered" Arena 38 Habermas points out that the ancient civilizations of Eygpt, Mesopotamia, China, India, Peru and Mexico all had a considerable development of the productive forces not as a condition but as a consequence of their rise.

There has only been one stage of history in which the economy has had the kind of independence from cultural, political, ideological, family, kinship etc factors even vaguely like that required for its dominant role in Marx's theory. This was the period of laissez-faire capitalism. The development of monopoly and state capitalism, aspects of the phenomenon of bureaucratization analyzed by Custoriadis in "Modern Capitalism and Revolution", has meant that granting of such a preponderant influence has to be balanced now by among other things the role of the state which has been a main factor in limiting the kind of crises Marx's analysis depends on. In fact if Marx's crisis was ever to occur then it did so in the 1930's depression. It is well known that the consequences were nothing like those predicted by marxism either revolution or the destruction of the productive forces — barbarism. Many marxists still rely on military spending to explain capitalism's ability to limit crises. In fact the arms race derives from the perceived needs for self perpetuation of the military-industrial complex in both U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. The fact that two of the most successful capitalist economies, Japan and West Germany, have little arms spending proves this. Recent marxist analysis of inflation give the state the role of permitting and encouraging inflation to check pressures against profits and then pulling back when the social fabric was endangered. (B. McFarlane Nation Review 9-15 June) This would serve to confirm Costoriadis' analysis. This will not be repeated here. Anyone in SMG who has not

read such material deserves to be locked in a room for a few days with half a dozen trotskyites. Anyone who is only reading them upon deciding to leave the group is a fool. The main point to be emphasized here, and which will be taken up later, is that the predictive validity of the "science" of marxism was disrupted by exactly those factors of the superstructure - the class struggle - which had been given the position of dependant phenomena. Far from being the grave diggers of capitalism the working class became capitalism's "saviours" by forcing upon capitalists the awareness that rising wages had enormous beneficial effects - especially the expansion of consumption and the creation of an internal market which could absorb numerous crises and the integration of workers through their unions into the lawful processes of society. The simple fact is that the predictions made by Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin were more accurate than those made available to Marx by his science (see 'The Relevance of Anarchism to Modern Society').



The Blind Leading The Blind

Down with the crisis theory! The blind forces which supposedly guarantee the final collapse of capitalist society are also blind to the result and here they offer no guarantees. Marx's allegiance to the crisis theory was based on his overwhelming concern to be scientific and to the nineteenth century philosopher this meant to discover absolute laws. An unpredictable phenomenon like the class struggle, involving, as it does, so many unverifiable phenomena could find no place in this science and had to be subsumed under other factors. For us an understanding of capitalist crisis is not restricted to economic phenomena (since economic phenomena are not restricted to economic factors) nor concerned to prove the inevitability of the exercise of laws. The significant crisis for us, the crisis which lays the basis for a challenge to capitalism, is a crisis of values and the challenge which such a crisis allows is based on the construction of alternative forms of interaction embodying socialist values (see 'The Crisis of Modern Society'). That there is such a crisis is obviously the result of "objective" factors but this crisis is

itself an "objective" factor. These objective factors can be delineated in terms of the increasing bureaucratization of society - the phenomena of apathy, privatization, consumerism, alienation etc. The possibility of an alternative is indeed dependent also on "objective " factors. But the realization of this possibility is dependent on personal change (on a mass scale), the spread of ideas and the expression of the self-activity of the majority in the form of democratic organisation which see itself as the total base for the management of society (autonomy in organization and in ideas). This is the only objective factor which promises a communist future. Marx says "Communism for us is not a state of things that ought to be made to exist, an ideal by which reality has to orient itself. We call communism the real movement which transcends the existing state of things. The determining factors of this movement are obtained from the premise existing now." After the factors, like those suggested above, which make a revolution a possibility are considered the only premise existing now which can determine communism is that the revolution be a conscious attempt to bring a state of affairs that ought to exist into existence.

It is not denied that there is a stream of thought running through marxism which could have avoided scientism and objectivism. Though this presence is maintained it is conquered by a historical materialism which "traces the dialectics of morality back to the dialectics of production" (Wellmer 'Critical Theory of Society' p.70) and has (and has been shown historically to have) certain manifest consequences for revolutionary activity chiefly, as indicated, the suppression of the view that liberating practice depends on a transformation of attitudes and modes of behaviour. This is the major lesson provided by the women's movement for contemporary revolutionaries. It has supposedly been the basis of libertarian practice and though its abandonment is on historical record the distinguishing feature of libertarians historically is the tendancy to align with that creative activity of the masses which involved such a liberating practice while other leftists served to actively oppose or manipulate such tendancies. The anarcho-syndicalist abandonment of this principle with the creation of organisation which recruited without challenging attitudes and modes of behaviour led to their position on the wrong side of the barricades (see 'The Lessons of Spain' V. Richards).

On a number of occasions Marx "stresses the necessity of protracted revolutionary processes of instruction only by means of which the proletariat will be able to acquire the maturity requisite for the assumption of political power" (Wellmer, p.88) (e.g. The Cologne Communist Trial). However historical materialism "neither allows the revolutionary process to be seriously comprehended as a process of enlightenment or the success of which the success of the revolution is ultimately dependent, nor does it permit an appropriate materialistic explication and criticism of the bourgeois concept of political freedom from which practical norms for revolutionary (political freedom) can be deduced. The two are closely connected: processes of collective enlightenment can be anticipated only on the premise of a normative concept of autonomy and "undistroted" communication. Understood as a process of enlightenment, the revolutionary process is subject to norms the explication of which is at one and the same time an explication of the political freedom to be realized, and the fulfillment of which, moreover, no historic destiny can guarantee" (Wellmer, p.89).

Values in the Theory of Value

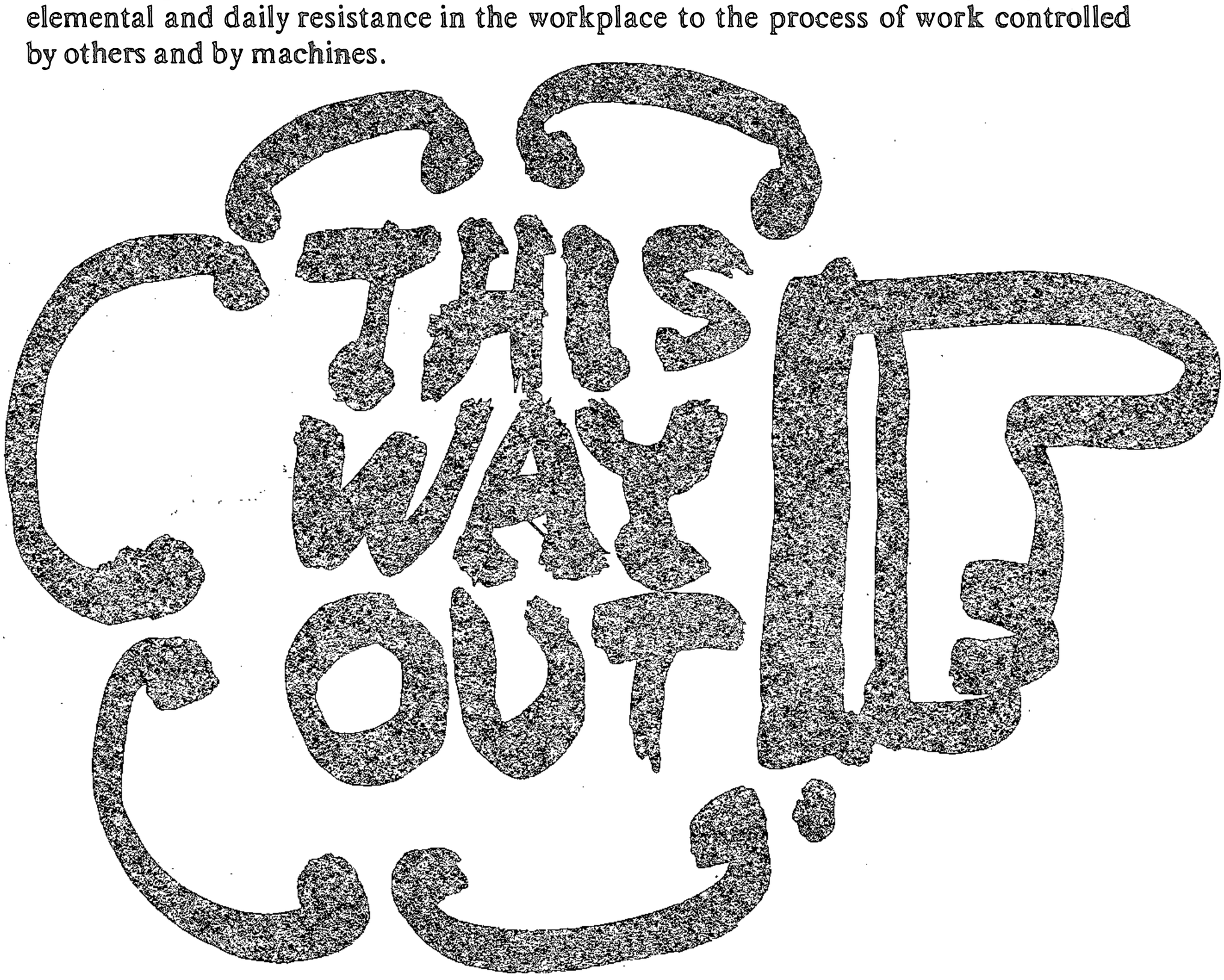
Wellmer is so delicate as to use the word "norms" in place of "ethics" or "morals" because he knows the sensitivity of his marxist audience. Marx was concerned to produce a scientific-economic demonstration of the redundancy and eventual end of capitalism. What he produced was a scientific economic foundation (disguise) for an ethical objection to capitalism but one which was flawed by the very attempt to avoid ethical objections. Marx's ethical objections derived from the belief that human being were deprived and distorted by capitalism. In 'The German Ideology' he says, "Proletarians in order to make themselves felt as persons, must abolish their own conditions of existence as they have been up to the present, which at the same time are the conditions of existence for all society up to the present time, namely labour. So they find themselves also in direct antagonism with the form in which individuals in society have up to now found their collective expression, the state, and they must overturn the state to express their personality." (A. Heller "The Theory of Need in Marx" p.90).

Marx, like all thinkers, had a concept of human nature (Fromm 'Crisis of Psychoanalysis', Ollman 'Alienation'). That it was de-emphasized was a result of specific factors in the intellectual climate of his time (see Ollman 'Introduction') and to the objectivism that is being discussed. It is amusing that so many marxists, who are normally willing to acknowledge the specificity of history, remain trapped in a frozen response from another century. The contemporary trend is the subsumption of humaneness under the constricting and obliterating growth of division and hierarchy. Human satisfaction is to be derived from increasingly partial and divided activity in all areas of life including relatedness in which the privatised nuclear unit is the model. The capitalist pimp mediates for a shallow passion of consumption. Hence we seek to delineate the limits of this process and to find an explanation for the forces of resistance and revolt which daily place such palpable limitations on this process so that the level of control never achieves its ideal state (as in 'Brave New World', or the ideal bureaucratic type described by Castoriadis in 'Modern Capitalism and Revolution'). But before pursuing this point it is necessary to illustrate how Marx constructed a "scientific-economic foundation for an ethical objection to capitalism" and how his objectivism submerged his concept of human nature and to trace some consequences.

Marx set out to scientifically disprove the bourgeois economists who had justified capitalism by constructing theories which proved that in the free market the wage labourer gets the correct value for the sale of his labour to the capitalist. There is an equal exchange. Marx found this to be true at the level of argument of the market and sought a deeper scientific refutation of this "equality", this "fair price", in production, that is, in the sale by the workers of their labour power the exercise of which, over time, for the capitalist involved more labour time than was necessary for the production of goods equivalent to the cost of keeping the labourer and his family alive. Thus the capitalist expropriated a surplus and the equality of the market was denied in production. But how absurd was this scientism when all around as Marx searched for a conclusive proof towered the immensity of capitalist exploitation in its essence - the power of some people to direct the activity of others, that is, the use of one person by another as a means. This exploitation need not be quantified in monetary gain. The capital/labour relation has to be understood socially, as one between dominator and dominated. Indeed it is only on this basis that the growth of the managerial hierarchy, of

private and state bureaucracy, the managers predominant role in capitalism etc. can be properly understood. The points taken from Marglin obviously back this view.

This relationship of domination/submission constitutes a denial of the fulfillment of the potentialities of the persons involved. Accepting, for the moment, Marx's terms - Is it the case that working in the public service where no surplus is expropriated is not as bad, say, as building a house for a capitalist master builder who expropriates surplus?. Is it not the case that the direct control, the differentiation of tasks, the absence of initiative makes the clerical worker a less fulfilled person than a worker who has access to a complete, self-directed process involving the exercise of substantial skills? Is it not the case that what constitutes the widely acknowledged view that work in the car industry is one of the worst jobs is the total control of the workers' activities by others and by machines whose speed is set by others, the minutely differentiated role in the whole process, the complete attempt to deny initiative, to subject the worker totally? Is it not this that makes it worse than say, the public service? To have worked from such a basis Marx would have to have developed his theory of needs. Instead he developed his application of the materialist conception of history to capitalism (as will be outlined later). His refutation of the bourgeois economists provided no guarantees. It would indeed have been utopian moralism to expect that the transmission of the workers of knowledge about the expropriation of surplus would revolutionise them, since this need not have corresponded to any daily experience of potentially revolutionary resistance to capitalism on their part. Unless they were paid less than subsistence required, there need be no discontent. The only other avenue to avoid utopian moralism besides historical materialism was to analyse the elemental and daily resistance in the workplace to the process of work controlled by others and by machines.



"Follow Me"

This is what Castoriadis has done. He is severely critical of Marxism's pretensions to general historical applicability and to predictive validity (see 'The Fate of Marxism', 'Critique of Historical Materialism' and interview in 'Telos' 23). He does not seek to replace marxism with another theory of inevitabilities. The break is with both the method and the content. He points out that the practical result of the analysis based on surplus, as the core of a socialist understanding of capitalism, is elitism. "Of those holding such views one could rightly enquire what precisely the working class could possibly learn in the course of its history, except that capitalism is bad and must be fought to the death? Working class knowledge of capitalist society could only mean working class knowledge of capitalism as the source of misery. The conditions of proletarian work and life cannot allow the working class to understand society's internal mechanisms, nor the real causes of what happens to the workers as a class. Only the theoreticians can understand these problems, for they are the only people who have studied the laws of the enlarged reproduction of capital and understood all about the falling rate of profit. If a socialist consciousness exists, its origin must be looked for elsewhere than in the proletariat." (Modern Capitalism and Revolution' p.41). This is the origin of the Kautsky-Lenin view that the working class can only achieve trade union consciousness not revolutionary consciousness. What is so arrogant about this misconception is that it is constantly disproved in all the major events which have developed the socialist project. All the elements of Marx's formulation of this project "arose in and throught workers' struggles - and before Marx (between 1790 and 1840 in England and France). All the relevant ideas were formed and formulated during that period: the fact that exploitation and its conditions, the project of a radical transformation of society, that of a government by the producers for the producers, the suppression of wage-labour..." (Telos 23).

"Only because Marx could rely on a revolutionary tradition, in which the intentions of achieving freedom of the individual and personal happiness were already more or less clearly bound up with the idea of a public political arena constituted by citizens able to communicate with one another without coercion, and with the ideas of public freedom and public happiness, was the young Marx's critique of Hegel able to become criticism of the ideology of the bourgeois constitutional state of the advanced Western type. Marx was able fundamentally to radicalize Hegel's criticism of a civil society "given up to itself" only because the movements of civil emancipation themselves had afforded a substantive concept of social freedom whose recognition already implies the judgement of the post-revolutionary society." (Wellmer p.87)

The Paris Commune developed this concept of social freedom and Marx felt bound to announce that it was the political form "at last discovered" for the economic emancipation of the working class. But Marx's enthusiasm was prompted by respect for the dead and along with them he also buried the lessons of the commune. For Kropotkin the Commune demonstrated that the push must be for further democratization (see "Revolutionary Government" and "The Commune of Paris"). Marx instead firmed in his belief in "the most decisive centralization of force in the hands of the state power" as against the "democratic talk of communes, self-government and so on". Marx's backwardness did not prevent further experiences of the creative role of the masses (with which members of the SMG should be familiar) which did push in the direction of further democratization. The point is that it was the masses who developed revolutionary

consciousness. Though they developed the soviets in 1905 by 1917 the factory committees had been created representing a more fundamental bases for their claims to self-organization. The regrowth of Soviets in 1917 in fact was the effort of liberal intellectuals also taking their models from the masses, (but in a backward sense) and for the purpose of building a base for themselves. Therefore the soviets were undemocratic and thought the workers were confused enough to still see a role for them they in fact ended up demonstrating against them. The factory committees embodied the best hope for revolution and the Bolsheviks use of the Soviets was part of their drive to consolidate their own power. "Follow me!" the vanguard said - but it walked behind.

The belief that socialism would be the enforced result of capitalist development and the belief that it would be brought about by a theoretically trained authoritarian minority which takes over the state jostle together uncomfortably in marxist history but both are fed by their common element in marxism - the mechanistic view "according to which revolution becomes the mere question of more or less expenses on the bill of history - since the end result of history is already settled." (Wellmer, p.75)

Human Nature and theory of needs

Castoriadis maintains the term contradiction (antagonism would be better) but it is a totally different contradiction. "Let us look first at the most fundamental level in production. The capitalist system can only maintain itself by trying to reduce workers into mere order-takers, into automatons, into 'executants' of decisions taken elsewhere. At the same time the system can only function as long as this reduction is never achieved. Capitalism is constantly obliged to solicit the participation of workers in the process of production (if workers didn't participate to some extent the system would soon grind to a halt). On the other hand capitalism constantly has to limit participation (if it didn't the workers would soon start deciding themselves and would show in practice how superfluous the ruling class really is). The same contradiction is to be found in almost identical form in politics and in cultural life. It is this that constitutes the fundamental fact of capitalism, the kernel of capitalist social relations, both yesterday and today." (Modern Capitalism and Revolution p.37). This contradiction can only appear when there is generalized wage labour, evolving technology and a political, cultural background provided by the enlightenment and the bourgeois-democratic revolution which, among other things, introduced the principle that the only foundation for social organization is reason. It should not be necessary to expand as Castoriadis' analysis is readily available. It is more useful to locate a point of difference between our analysis and that of Castoriadis and since he has this in common with Marx they will be discussed together.

Marx's concept of human nature plays no dynamic role in his theory of needs. Marxist needs theory revolves around the conquest of nature, the gradual removal of man from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom (the problematic, as they say, nature of this freedom will be discussed later) and this much he has in common with Fromm. But it is tied very much to the idea of the actual growth of needs consequent on the growth of productive capacity. As McLellan says (p.71) capitalism "had replaced natural needs by those historically created."

It is certainly true that scientific and technological development have expanded the realm of satisfaction of human needs. It is equally true that they have provided the basis of an ecologically unsound and consumerist society in which it becomes

vital to differentiate between 'true' and 'false' needs in order to portray any alternative. If certain benefits of technological progress are to become rights then it makes sense to say that there are new and necessary needs, not needs that reside in the existential conditions of humanity but needs that embody the demand of all people to take full advantage of what combined human effort can offer them. However an analysis of consumer society, of conspicuous consumption, of waste, of the neuroticism of satisfaction and status deriving from material possessions could not be based on such a purely historical view of needs but would have to refer to the alienated expression of human capacities and what constituted unalienated satisfaction. Without this latter aspect what exists must be considered normal and terms like "degraded", "dehumanized", "fragmented", "thwarted" etc. are invalid. But if the "thwarted" etc. nature of the worker is only defined by a "future" unalienated state then where is the bridge to this state, what is the source of a reactive resistance to degradation? For Marx the very extremity of alienation which is "practically complete" (Ollman p.239), is the source of radical needs (Heller Chapter 4) created by a process in capitalism automatically (this process will be discussed). Thus Marx suffered from an "oversocialized" concept of humanity. If the worker can be so degraded then he/she will be incapable of awareness of that degradation, or to put it another way, will be happy. Marx's only way out of this bind is typically nineteenth century concept of durable rationality descended from the naive optimism of the Enlightenment. "The main weakness in Marx's conception of human nature is that the link between conditions and behaviour, for all the attention accorded it, is underdeveloped." (Ollman. p.238)

Even while granting almost total power to society Marx could not explain phenomena of working class conservatism and of the irrational in politics. Rational awareness would be a natural product of capitalist development. Such confident objectivism has been deflated by numerous events not the least of which was the rise of fascism and, for many marxists in the thirties, the failure of the workers to defeat it. In this context the first flourish of marxist interest in psychoanalysis occurred (Fromm, Reich, the Frankfurt School). This was duly suppressed where possible by the movement but re-emerged to confront the problem of a stabilized post war capitalism. Some acknowledgement of the psyche is now the stock in trade of many marxists (aside from Trotskyites and Stalinists). But this has usually not been associated with any attempt to understand what elements in marxism led to these theoretical failures. Many accept that this was solely as a result of the fact that Marx was pre-Freudian. They maintain their scientism, only now they consider that Freudian psychoanalysis is the complementary science for marxism. (e.g. Althusser, Juliet Mitchell). An uncritical combination of marxism and freudianism will be as helpful for theory as banging two bricks together.

The avenue for an understanding of the link between conditions and behaviour is Fromm's concept of social character. Fromm uncritically accepts that the most dangerous errors in Marx's thinking derived from his "underestimation of the complexity of human passions....He did not recognize the irrational forces in man which make him afraid of freedom, and which produce his lust for power and his destructiveness. On the contrary, underlying his concept of man was the implicit assumption of man's natural goodness." (The Sane Society. p.264). Marx "had not sufficiently recognised that human nature has itself needs and laws which are in constant interaction with the economic conditions which shape historical development; lacking in satisfactory psychological insights, he did not have a sufficient concept of human character, and was not aware of the fact that while

man was shaped by the form of social and economic organization, he in turn also molded it. He did not sufficiently see the passions and strivings which are rooted in man's nature, and in the conditions of his existence, and which are in themselves the most powerful driving force for human development." (p.263)

The concept of social character provides at one and the same time an explanation of those factors of stability by which society organizes people's energies into patterns suitable to social structures and processes and also those factors of resistance by which the achievement of the ideal state of social control is thwarted. The problem with Castoriadis' analysis of the contradiction in capitalism is similar to the problem just discussed in marxism. He maintains a naive concept of the permanent openness of people under capitalism. This permanently virginal and uncorrupted state is supposedly maintained by a hectic need of capitalism for total adaptability and changeability on the part of its workers. It is one thing to understand that bureaucracy is inherently inefficient and would die of total incapacity to respond but for the informal initiative of individuals, or that the consumer market requires the manipulation and creation of needs or that the production process and capitalist technique require the adaptability of the workers - it is quite another thing to picture capitalism as a society of "perpetual renewal" constantly overturning its "norms, rules, techniques and values" and requiring transformations of behaviour constantly (Modern Capitalism and Revolution. p.69). Castoriadis argues that this distinguishes capitalism from 'long periods of history' during which mankind was actually converted into "quasi-objects". Humanity "is almost indefinitely plactic". Therefore in certain circumstances, such as slavery or the concentration camps, "men have almost been reduced to the status of objects". Only "the look or the speech of a slave....bore witness to his indestructible humanity". In fact conditions of slavery and concentration camps reveal exactly opposite conclusions. It was possible in the concentration camps for an inmate to remain in such a state of shock that without a deliberate effort by his fellows he would respond like a zombie. But the inmates (not those who were hustled straight from the trains to their deaths but those who were selected to work) constructed a varied and complex pattern of interaction and developed and expanded a level of awareness and a system of co-operation that clearly made them subjects even to the extent where the Nazis own attempt to perceive them as objects became a barrier to their total control of camp life. All that was required for such a development was time, some continuity of personnel and will. Because such real camp societies were created the inmates were able to undertake the enormously complicated and dangerous task of organising revolts. These were not sudden outbursts of enraged beasts but planned, co-operative efforts and they involved camp-wide experiences of elation, despair, anticipation, etc. (see 'Treblinka': Steiner and 'The Survivor': des Pres)

Castoriadis argues that the demand for fluidity by capitalism prevents people from becoming objects which is the natural tendancy of bureaucratic society. "We are not saying that bureaucratic society is contrary to human nature. There is no human nature...And it is precisely for this reason that man cannot become an object and that the bureaucratic goal is utopian." (Modern Capitalism & Revolution p.70).

Castoriadis underestimates the requirement in the workplace for automatic discipline and obedience. Though social needs differ in different societies, in the development of capitalism "Man had to be moulded into a person who was eager to spend most of his energy for the purpose of work, who acquired discipline,

particularly orderliness and punctuality, to a degree unknown in most other cultures...This means that society had to produce a social character in which these strivings were inherent" (The Sane Society' p.80). To be convinced of the absence of such strivings prior to capitalism it is only necessary to refer to Marglin's article or Chapter 5 in 'The Sane Society'. The "social character's function (is) to mould and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society" (p.79).

Castoriadis' emphasis on capitalism's need for fluidity is an attempt to explain resistance without relying on an concept of the resilience of the human personality. He falls between the two stools and neither explains resistance or how capitalism satisfies its demand, just as Marx could not explain resistance except by a naive faith in rationality which then crippled any ability to explain working class conservatism and irrationalism. Fromm's use of the concept social character in 'The Sane Society' and 'Escape From Freedom' defies description as "ahistorical". His description of the process of individuation is similar to Marx's but Fromm would neither ascribe the longevity of the pre-capitalist order to "natural needs" nor ascribe the role of individualism in capitalism to the "growth of needs". In fact catholicism, for example, held sway because it provided satisfaction for profound and lasting human strivings and in the absence of such unitary satisfaction these same strivings took a new historical role.

Fromm's Contribution

It is necessary then to explain Fromm's derivation of character. Firstly it is psychoanalytic. However, Fromm's revisionist Freudianism is not based on the structuring of instinctual human psychic energy as in Freud but non-instinctual energy deriving from the conditions of human existence. Because Freud's theory was not instinctivist in the traditional sense but subsumed all instincts under one i.e. sexuality (self-preservation is not important here) which by the influence of the environment created drives, he was able to develop the role of the unconscious and a dynamic (i.e. not fixed by a new instinct for each motive) concept of character. Character transcends the dichotomy of instinct and environment. Fromm retains these insights (and others) from Freud.

Fromm's view of human nature is based firstly in that the existential condition of mankind is a biological given "The main argument in favour of the assumption of the existence of human nature is that we can define the essence of Homo sapiens in morphological, anatomical, physiological and neurological terms. In fact we can give an exact and generally accepted definition of the species man by data referring to posture, formation of the brain, the teeth, diet and many other factors by which we clearly differentiate him from the most developed nonhuman primates. Surely we must assume, unless we regress to a view that considers body and mind as separate realms, that the species man must be definable mentally as well as physically." (The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness" p.220). To define the species mentally two fundamental biological conditions that mark the arrival of homo sapiens in evolution are considered. Firstly no other species is less determined by instincts than mankind. "It is generally accepted that the higher an animal has risen in the stages of evolution, the less is the weight of stereotyped behaviour patterns that are strictly determined and phylogenetically programmed in the brain" (p.223) and we are the culmination of this trend. Secondly we are at the height of an evolutionary continuum starting with the most primitive nervous system and culminating in the human brain, more complex than any other, with a

neo-cortex three times as large as that of our nearest hominid ancestors "and a truly fantastic number of interneuronal connections". (p.223) The marxists have evaded an ominously material fact and the most decisive distinguishing fact about humanity - the development of the cerebral neocortex. This is the only possible basis for Marx's definition of human nature as "free, conscious activity". Not only does the brain not compensate for the absence of determined behaviour (instincts) but it enables self-awareness and therefore an awareness of separatedness from nature and others, of powerlessness, ignorance and death. This is the existential contradiction of being at once in and out of nature. It is associated also with certain universal experiences. The very behavioural weakness resulting from the absence of instincts means that human babies require a long nurturing period during which they are dependent and subject to adults and from which they only gradually emerge emotionally from a state of necessary narcissism to sociality and at the same time develop in their realization of the possibilities of self-awareness and reason consequent on developing brain function. Each baby is a re establishment of the existential conditions of human life in a universal context of dependance which has a profound impact on the nature of human needs providing as it does the psychic models for the alternatives on the continuum of human growth, for example most importantly as regards the need for relatedness it provides the model for regression to self-dissolution in another. It is here Fromm is able to use the form of Freud's child psychology without the impediment of the crucial role for Freud of the "universal" Oedipul conflict which has been shown not to be universal anyway. Instead it is replaced by an understanding of a universal situation of emergence from powerlessness in which parents and others are power figures (see 'The Crisis in Psychoanalysis", S. Firestone 'The Dialectic of Sex' for her reinterpretation of the Oedipul conflict in terms of power and 'A Critical Examination of Feminism' by J.L.)

The existential contradiction produces a disequilibrium which can be stabilised in culture but will reappear if the conditions for stability change. There are many models of needs but none associated with as clear a combination of the benefits of psychoanalysis and an understanding of the human condition as in Fromm. Needs are conceptual categories which have to be backed by evidence and coherence of explanation. The human psyche is a structure charged with energy not a receptacle to be filled by society or a predetermined behaviour pattern which is set off automatically and which is redirected to create new equally controlled behaviour. Retaining the dynamic aspect of Freud, Fromm argues that "man's nature cannot be defined in terms of a specific quality, such as love, hate, reason, good or evil but only in terms of fundamental contradictions which characterize human existence and have their root in the biological dichotomy between missing instincts and self-awareness (this conflict) produces certain psychic needs common to all men" (p.226), needs for excitation and stimulation (without human social stimulation, warmth and freedom for curiosity the brain may not develop properly), for effectiveness, for relatedness, for transcendent unity, for cohesion or identity, for a frame of orientation and devotion. Through these needs the attempt is made to overcome separateness, powerlessness and lostness. These needs can be satisfied in different ways depending on different social conditions. "These different ways of satisfying the existential needs manifest themselves in passions, such as love, tenderness, striving for justice, independance, truth, hate, sadism, masochism, destructiveness, narcissism. I call them character rooted passions - or simply human passions - because they are integrated in man's character." (p.226)

"Character is the relatively permanent system of all non instinctual strivings through which man relates himself to the human and natural world" (p.226). All people have their organic drives and their existential needs in common. Where they vary is in the kinds of passions which dominate their characters and this is largely due to social conditions. Therefore the character rooted passions are an historical category but not purely so "because they are the result of the impact the various historical constellations have on the biologically given conditions of human existence". (p.227)

In the absence of instincts character allows effective behaviour to occur - immediate action, limited doubts and integrated patterns. "The more Homo developed the less was adaptation a result of genetic changes, and in fact the last forty thousand years such changes are virtually nil. Yet....different environmental situations made it necessary for each group to adapt its behaviour to these respective situations, not only by learning but also by developing a "social character". As was said the aim was to organize energies so that people will "want to do what they have to do if society is to function properly".

Conditions and Behaviour

Does it follow then that humanity conforms to the view of the environmentalists (including many marxists and feminists) that a person is a blank sheet of paper on which the culture writes its text? Obviously not given the role of biologically given conditions. Adaptation to society is both active and passive. Character cannot just embody the needs of society for it only has a hold by their being enmeshed in the needs of the individual. In fact it is the need for relatedness which holds society together not power hierarchies. A minimum level of human co-operation is maintained. At work informal structures approximating community in work prevent the uninvolved synthesizers of the divided work process from stifling production, while outside networks of mutuality compensate for the potentially crippling divisions created by bureaucracy. Again the concentration camps serve to illustrate a point. Until co-operation emerged amongst the inmates the only way the Nazis could keep production going was to maintain so total a programme of supervision and absolute terror that it was bound to prove inefficient and was changed. Human nature must mould the social conditions. Needs "are also dynamic factors in the historical process which, if frustrated, tend to arouse psychic reactions, ultimately creating the very conditions suited to the original strivings". (The SaneSociety', p.81). Indeed if a society too drastically distorts satisfaction it can set up such pressure for different solutions, rational and irrational, as to establish a destructive dynamic. Or the process can occur in another way. The modes of satisfaction in a particular social character having become traditional can remain resistant to new social conditions which attempt to enforce new demands and can play a decisive role in the way these new conditions establish themselves, cause delay or prevent their implantation. E.P. Thompson points to this effect in "The Making of the English Working Class". The traditional marxist could only see such effects as reactionary when in fact they can become a positive part of an ongoing resistance. Similarly the marxist would not see the determining role played by a pre-existing culture. Also Marglin points out that it was no accident that child labour was so common in early industrial capitalism. The bosses were attempting to deliberately mould a working class in habits they required because adults persisted in maintaining a certain attitude to

work. It is thus possible, either by this latter process of a "lag" or by the assertion of needs for what was social cement to become social dynamite. In fact the social character itself is the most important productive force and can advance or inhibit the social development of a society including its technical development. Further, it is only because the assertion of human needs prevents a society from "oversocializing" itself, so that it becomes unresponsive, that development remains possible.

In this respect two points need mention, one to do with variety and one with development but they will require prefactory comments. The social character could only stabilize society if it was able to satisfy human needs substantially for long periods of time. Fromm's point is that "the life-thwarting passions (e.g. destructiveness or masochism) are as much an answer to man's existential needs as life-furthering passions: they are both profoundly human. The former necessarily develop when the realistic conditions for the realization of the latter are absent". (Anatomy of Human Distructiveness P.264).

Fromm refers to neurophysiological evidence that homo sapiens can be defined, amongst other things, as a being in active search of optimal development. In this sense the passions can be irrational by not furthering the growth and well being of the organism (unlike the organic drives (hunger etc) which are always rational) "yet they have their rationality in terms of the particular historical structure within which a person lives" (p.264) because particular conditions deny optimal development of humanity. It follows that the only claim socialism can make for itself is that it allows this optimal development. Therefore the question for socialists is 'what conditions are necessary for this goal?'.

"Man the destroyer may be called vicious because destructiveness is a vice; but he is human. He has not regressed to animal existence and is not motivated by animal instincts; he cannot change the structure of his brain. One might consider him an existential failure, a man who has failed to become what he could be according to the possibilities of his existence. In any case for a man to be stunted in his growth and become vicious is as much a real possibility as to develop fully and to be productive, the one or the other outcome mainly depends on the presence - or absence of social conditions conducive to growth." (p.265)

The first point then follows from the point that few societies exclude conditions for the development of life-furthering passions. Fromm's review of primitive tribes (p.167f.) shows that most were life affirmative or non-destructive-aggressive rather than destructive (by the way, the fact that such variety could exist in societies of similar mode of production is more pie in Marx's face). With the growth of "civilization" life-affirmative societies became absent and destructive societies more common. But a destructive society is less adaptable than one which allows a greater range of passions to exist. In fact a variety of passions will usually exist commensurate with the variety of humanity attested by literature of the past. It is not insignificant that we can identify with our predecessors. It is only on the basis of variety that there were people able to record their times in fact or fiction or that people dedicated to reason were able to preside over philosophical developments which were based on what had gone before and not a simple product of social conditions. Even before our own individualistic times variety of human personality was an omnipresent reality of human life. While this is not necessarily relevant at the social theoretical level because patterns and trends must necessarily "smooth out" reality for the sake of coherence, this bumpy reality does not disappear when a "smooth" theory appears and therefore should not be forgotten. Fromm makes

the point that the social character types he describes are types and that most people show a mixture of traits with a minority cluster at the extremes. In fact this has been supported by large scale social-psychological survey work by Fromm and others. There is a shallow trend in marxism to rigidly perceive people through their class. (Indeed, the attempt to explain away discomforting features of individuals or ideas on the basis of "class background" or present "class interests" has not been absent from some individuals in the marxist tendancy in S.M.G.).

The second point is that part of the dynamic of human history is changing situations for the satisfaction of human needs. Firstly it is obvious that in a situation of social change or disintegration, no matter what the cause, "we see the disappearance of traditional ties that maintained the stability of society; there is change in traditional emotional attitudes. Libidinal energies are freed for new uses, and thus change their social function. They no longer serve the preservation of the society, but contribute to the development of new social formations." ('The Crisis of Psychoanalysis' p.179. In this early essay Fromm was still using Freudian terminology, hence 'libidinal'). New social formations may embody a higher development of needs in the sense that a closer approximation to optimal human development becomes more general. Needs which were thwarted or irrationally redirected may no longer be so restricted. Their satisfaction at the most rational (in the sense described before) way may become a widely articulated social demand. All this may be solidified in certain rights and ideals for which people will struggle. New conditions may also involve a step backward.

Further to this point, in the situation of social change or disintegration what is occurring more often than not is a dramatic aggravation of the existential condition of people. Old certainties may be destroyed and psychic refuges for basic needs broken up. Answers, rational or irrational, to the human problem that have worked for generations may have to be given up. Individuals may find themselves naked, alone, powerless, and without direction and their search for new answers will be desperate. Examples of such periods are numerous. This may only be happening to certain groups in society. But what if this situation has become basic? Fromm argues that the collapse of the feudal order and catholicism with the development of capitalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the great revolutions and the Enlightenment meant the destruction of primary ties in which humankind was immersed. "The primary ties block his full human development; they stand in the way of the development of his reason and his critical capacities; they let him recognize himself and others only through the medium of his, or their, participation in a clan, a social or religious community, and not as human beings; in other words, they block his development as a free, self-determining, productive individual. But although this is one aspect, there is another one. This identity with nature, clan, religion, gives the individual security. He belongs to, he is rooted in, a structuralized whole in which he has an unquestionable place. He may suffer from hunger or suppression, but he does not suffer from the worst of all pains - complete aloneness and doubt." ('Escape from Freedom' p.51) "Each step in the direction of growing individuation threatened people with new insecurities...There is only one possible productive solution for the relationship of the individualized man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and women and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual. However, if the economic, social and political conditions on which the whole process of human individuation depends, do not offer a basis for the realization of individuality in the sense just mentioned, while at the same time people have lost those ties which gave them

security, this lag makes freedom an unbearable burden. It then becomes identical with doubt, with a kind of life which lacks meaning and direction. Powerful tendencies arise to escape from this kind of freedom into submission or some kind of relationship to man and the world which promises relief from uncertainty, even if it deprives the individual of his freedom." (p.52) "He pays for this new security by giving up the integrity of his self (to authorities). The factual dichotomy between him and these authorities does not disappear. They thwart and cripple his life even though consciously he may submit voluntarily. At the same time he lives in a world in which he has not only developed into being an "atom" but which also provides him with every potentiality for becoming an individual." (p.263)

At this point we can return to the criticism of marxist needs theory for providing an insufficient basis for a critique of consumer capitalism. As was said, thought Marx has similarities to this idea of individuation in fact he saw an unlimited "growth" of needs as a result of capitalism and he meant this both in the negative exploitative sense that "Every person speculates on creating a new need in another in order to force him to a new sacrifice, to place him in a new dependence, and to entice him into a new kind of pleasure." ('Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' p.141 in 'Marx's Concept of Man' - Fromm) and also in the positive sense of the cultivation of the qualities of the social human being. Though Heller tries to develop the idea of manipulated needs she says "Whether needs are 'normal' or whether they are 'artificial'...depends completely upon the value judgements with which we define 'normality'. However, even if we sought a so-called 'objective' criterion we would only be able to conclude that, at any time. 'normal' needs are those which individuals deem to be such, 'sophisticated' or 'unnatural' needs, on the other hand, are those which the majority regards as such". (Heller, p.50) How then is it possible to separate "the development of a qualitatively many-sided rich world of needs" from a multitude of "inhuman, artificial cravings"? The weakness of the position is revealed when Marx develops the idea of the reduction of needs. "For the worker even the need for fresh air ceases to be a need" and "The Irish no longer have any need but that of eating-eating potatoes" (Marx's Concept of Man" pp.142-143). In Marx's concept of alienation this absolute reduction is central to the emergence of radical needs which transcend capitalist society. "The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order that he might yeild his inner wealth to the outer world" (Heller p.58). Again the total violation by society - the oversocialized concept of humanity.

Heller is aware what this means "Marx does not return elsewhere to the psychological aspect of needs; but on the question he clearly never gave up his rationalist,'Enlightenment' point of view. The point is not only that he assumes that in the society of associated producers (communism) the structure of the psyche or of consciousness will be profoundly different from that of the present, but also that he never questions this possibility or the process itself, nor does he raise the question of the tempo of this change in psyche. So long as men are changing society they are also radically changing themselves; it is 'natural' (that is, 'normal') process, whose outcome is never in doubt." (pp.43-44)

Heller is aware of the only alternative but being a good marxist quickly adds in the next paragraph that she would not like to be misunderstood as defending the notion of human nature. Fromm's alternative, based on the process of individuation, is to see the way that consumer society offers people feelings of security and identity in receiving all that there is to be had. What makes such satisfaction false is that they involve no change or development within the

individual (see 'The Sane Society' Chapter 5,C and 'Escape from Freedom' Chapter 4). In his early writings on such subjects Marx came closer to successful prediction than he did with his economics in strikingly apt descriptions of phenomena all too familiar today.

Scientific Utopianism — Socialism as Nationalization plus Rationalization

As was promised earlier the implications of the centrality of the surplus theory and the application of the materialist conception of history (as described in the first quote from Marx) to capitalism will now be examined. The subject here is how the contradiction between the development of the forces of production and the relations of production occurs in capitalism. "This contradiction, inherent in the process of capitalist production is the source of the conflicts which Marx expected to bring about the period of social revolution. The problem of precisely how this contradiction can be expected to lead to the break down of the capitalist system (has plagued marxism for years)...yet this gap is present not because the problem was insoluble for Marx, not because he saw no answer, but because the conclusions he reached in the Grandrisse" were not published until 1939. (M.Nicolaus 'The Unknown Marx' New Left Review, 1968, p.102)

McLellan points out that Marx envisages a time when production depends not on the amount of labour employed but on the general level of science and technology, when the measure of wealth is the enormous disproportion between the labour time employed and the size of the product, when man behaves as the supervisor and regulator of the process of production'. Then the true emancipation of mankind will take place. (In the Grundrisse Marx says) "In this reorientation what appears as the mainstay of production and wealth is neither the immediate labour performed by the worker, nor the time he works - but the appropriation of his general productive force, his understanding of nature and the mastery of it as a special force; in a word, the development of the social individual.

The theft of other's labour time upon which wealth depends today seems to be a miserable basis compared with the newly developed foundation that has been created by heavy industry itself. As soon as labour, in its direct form, has ceased to be the main source of wealth then labour time ceases, and must cease, to be its standard measurement, and thus exchange value must cease to be the measurement, of use-value. The surplus labour of the masses has ceased to be a condition for the development of wealth in general in the same way .that the non-labour of the few has ceased to be a condition for the development of the powers of the human mind in general." (The Thought of Karl Marx P.78)

McLellan says "The profits of capitalism were built on the creation of surplus work time, yet at the same time the wealth of capitalism emancipated man from manual labour and gave him increasing access to free time...(capitalism's) wealth was based on the introduction of machinery followed (Marx's forsight here is extraordinary) by that of automation and this entailed an ever-growing contradiction between the decreasing role played by labour in the production of social wealth and the necessity for capital to appropriate surplus labour." (p.73)

The points to watch in this view of the contradiction are that: the source of historical change is again resolved into technological change as was claimed in the early pages of this paper where a quote from the Grundrisse was cited, that the creation of the social individual (and of radical needs) is an automatic result of the exercise of the contradiction, that the nature of freedom has begun to be defined as free time, that the capitalist development of the means of production which is the basis for socialism is the greatest possible development of large scale automated machine industry, that there has been a change in the attitude to work, that the development of science has been accorded enormous importance in the "general intellect" through which mastery over nature is achieved and finally (and. of course) that the end of capitalism is a pre-ordained result of history.

The quote from the Grundrisse continues, "Capital is contradiction embodied in a process, since it makes an effort to reduce labour time to the minimum, while at the same time establishing labour time as the sole measurement and source of wealth. Thus it diminishes labour time in its necessary form, in order to increase its superfluous form; therefore it increasingly establishes superfluous labour time as a condition (a question of life and death) for necessary labour time.

On the one hand it calls into life all the forces of science and nature, as well as those of social co-operation and commerce, in order to create wealth which is relatively independent of the labour time utilised. On the other hand, it attempts to measure the vast social forces thus created in terms of labour time, and imprisons them within the narrow limits that are required in order to retain the value already created as value. Productive forces and social relationships - the two different sides of the development of social individuality - appear only as means for capital, and are for it only a measure to enable it to produce from its own cramped foundation. But in fact they are the material conditions that will shatter this foundation." (McLellan p.73-74) (In Capital this becomes the basis for the falling rate of profit. (McLellan p.87)).

The social universal individual is a necessary product of capitalism - of automated production. And its universality consists in the production of the capacity for varied work. At the same time the nature of automatic production produces intensified alienation from which follows consciousness of alienation and therefore new (completely) radical needs which must transcend capitalism.

In automated production "Labour no longer appears as an integral element of the productive process; rather, man acts as supervisor and regulator of the productive process itself....He stands at the side of the productive process." (From Grundrisse p.106 Nicolaus)

In Capital "But if, on the one hand, the variation of work at present imposes itself after the manner of an overpowering natural law, and with the blindly destructive action of a natural law that meets with resistance at all points, modern industry, on the other hand, through its catastrophies imposes the necessity of recognizing, as a fundamental law of production, the variation of work, and consequently the fitness of the labourer for varied work, and consequently the greatest possible development of his varied aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so

many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquiring powers." (Heller p.93)

Thus the conditions for the social individual "can only be established by the historical economic process" (McLellan p.76). In this development of historical materialism what has become clear is that what is necessary for the continued survival of the industrial system.

McLellan's conclusion from the passage above is that the continuity of earlier notions is maintained - that the "all round" individual of the 1844 manuscripts is the same as the social individual. Wellmer argues that the concept of the "complete man" has been modified and a decisive aspect of the substantive freedom of such a man is eliminated (p.105). "The young Marx's criticism of the 'complementary abstractness' of the liberal - and Hegel's - conception of a free society is revoked...not by the late Marx himself but by the perfected reference system of historical materialism: it can, so to speak, no longer be formulated." This can be illustrated by a discussion of the changed concepts of work and freedom which must be preceeded by a discussion of alienation and the 'general intellect'.

The intensification of alienation flows from the nature of automated production when the worker removed, 'stands at the side' of the work process and machines (constant capital) dominate. In the Grundrisse Marx says, "In fact, in the capitalist production process...labour as a totality, is not the work of the individual worker, and is only the work of the various workers taken together, insofar as they are combined, in the sense that they do not behave towards one another as if they were united. In their combination, this labour appears both to be performed in the service of an alien will and an alien intelligence, and directed by that alien intelligence - it seems to have a spiritual unity external to the labour itself, just as in its material unity it is subjected to the objective unity of machinery, of capital fire, which as a terrifying animate colossus objectifies scientific thought and is in actuality the subsuming whole, but is in no way a mere tool for the individual worker; on the contrary, the individual worker exists, an individual animate punctuality, as an isolated living accessory to this whole. Combined labour is therefore in two aspects combination in itself; not combination as the mutual relationship of the individuals engaged in work together, not as their extension, whether beyond their specific or isolated function or beyond the instrument of labour. Therefore if the worker treats the product of his labour as something alien, it is just as true that he treats combined labour as something alien, even as he treats his own labour as something which indeed pertains to him but is essentially an enforced expression of life and alien to him, and which Adam Smith therefore conceives as a burden, sacrifice and so on." (Wellmer, P111).

This is a description of alienation that would seem to fit with the aim of the democratization and humanization of work. However, when read in the context of Marx's view on the solution to this alienation and his view on freedom and work it must be interpreted differently.

This alienation is overcome by its production of the social individual which means "the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and the control of nature through his existence as a social unit." (p.108). The 'general intellect' is the capacity for rationalization of production. Only the assumption that Marx is necessarily talking about democratization and humanization of work can lead to such an interpretation of this description of the social individual. In fact the source of alienation in production is not actually being touched at all. All that has happened is that the theft of working time of

labour by capital has ceased as a result of the technological development and scientific rationalization (especially automation) of production. Production dependent on exchange value must collapse as a consequence. Further to this - rationalization of production can now be devoted without inhibition to the reduction of the working day and the escape from alienation in free time. It becomes clear that the only necessary democratization is that of education so that the means can be made available for the cultivated use of free time.

In Capital Marx abandons his original conception that work would become a 'vital need', a means of self realization. Labour is not free self-activity. "In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only when labour is determined by necessity and mundane considerations cease." (Capital quoted Heller p.119). Heller comments "production does not 'need' to be performed by 'changed', 'richer' human beings" (p.120). In Marx's changed conception labour is a 'social duty'. Furthermore "In Capital, on the other hand, he means that all labour will be reduced to simple labour which is easy to learn and perform." Therefore the university of the 'universal individual' "does not mean - at least where the labour process is concerned - that people may excel in various fields, but that they can always 'change' their work, without having specific qualifications." (Heller p.108). Indeed how could it be otherwise when work consists of tending a huge complex of constantly humming machines and remaining 'alongside the process of production'. In this respect complex labour (such as the scientific control of production) lies outside necessary work which was a social duty. Heller cannot find definite answers in Marx to the implications of such a situation. A logical implication will be suggested later. Marx then, saw freedom and riches as consisting in increasing availability of 'disposable time' outside of production. In the German Ideology and earlier works Marx argued that emancipation and the transcendence of alienated labour meant exactly that the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity would coincide. Marxist communism has become "a backyard of leisure in the industrial prison".

Wellmer comments "The qualitative transformation, which was always concomitant with the idea of a transcendence of capitalist private ownership, is now incorporated into the one-dimensional advance of a process of rationalization, at the end of which the process of social life will be organized wholly in accordance with the same principle of technical rationality which are at present already largely at work in the organization of the process of production. The model taken as a basis here is not that of a practical reason that becomes actual in non-coercive communication and co-operation, but that of a technical rationality opposed to and controlling nature and society alike: the factor determining the possibility of the effective operation of this rationality is not unobstructed communication, but the occupation of positions of power. ...the emancipation of individuals would then, in fact be conceivable as the result of a scientifically directed reorganization of society by means of a revolutionary minority governing through an authoritarian regime" (p.109-110) rather than "the production of a democratic public attainable only by enlightenment and collective emancipation" (p.113).

Heller comes up against the question of democracy. "Who makes the decisions about how productive capacity should be allocated? Who decides, for example, how long the production of 'goods' directly serving consumption can 'wait'? Marx's reply, of course, is everyone...But how can every individual make such decisions? Marx did not answer this question, because for him it did not arise. For us, however, in our times, it has become perhaps the most decisive question of all.

The focal point of contemporary marxism is to work out models for this (or at least it ought to be)." (p.124) She then goes on to outline why "Marx did not even once formulate the question about 'how every individual can take part in decision-making' " and her answer is woolly evasion about the absence of interest and the unity of the individual and the species. We also discover that there will be no rights or institutions under communism. It is also noticeable that she does not ask questions about who will decide within production. Here, at least, Marx gave evidence that alienating factors of production go with "automatic system of machinery" not just with the capitalist context of relations.

Can Engels' "On Authority" which attributes hierarchy necessarily to machine production be disassociated from Marx? Instead of looking for organizational sources for personal change they looked to the actual process of capitalist production including centralization to create a disciplined united and centralized proletariat. Why did they remain committed to the seizure of the state? Fromm points out that "they could not free themselves from the traditional view of the importance of the state and political power, from the idea of the primary significance of mere political change, an idea which had been the guiding principle of the great middle-class revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this respect Marx and Engles were much more 'bourgeois' thinkers than were men like Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Landauer" ('The Sane Society, p.259), but when there were alternative conceptions with which they identified at times (see p.123 Wellmer) why did this view dominate? Why did they talk about free time ("hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, criticize after dinner") and about "the administration of things" and not talk about democracy? The answer must lie, as their view of class shows, in the failure to confront the problem of power and hierarchy itself as the source of human oppression and exploitation and, in the case of communism, to confront the need to manage production democratically and to manage society on this basis.

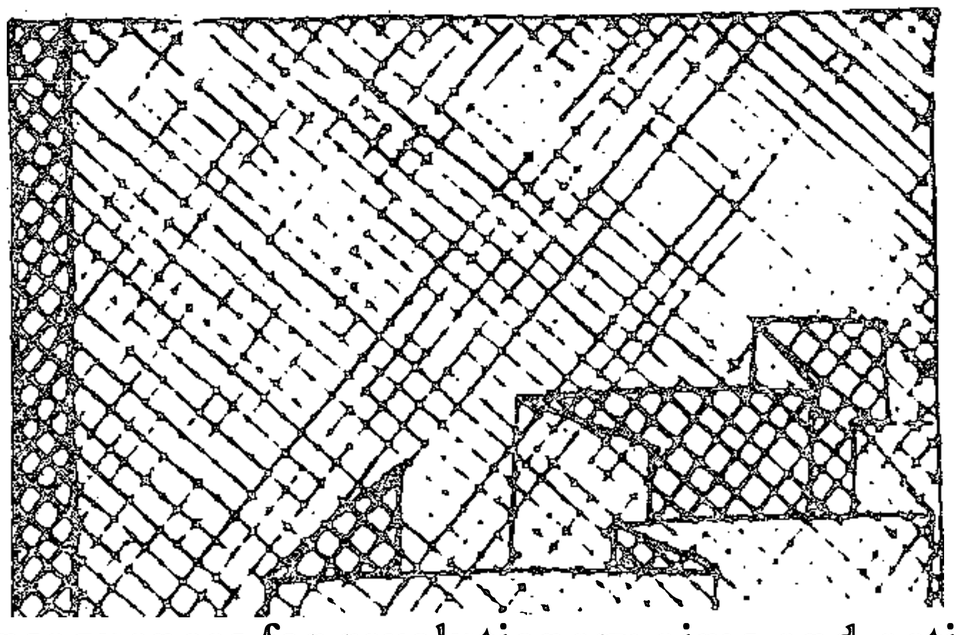
Instead freedom in production, which is not the real freedom offered by Marx, consists of "The associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by blind forces of nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature". (Capital, Heller p.119). Wellmer points out that "the decisive qualitative difference between the capitalist and socialist systems must reside primarily in the differing forms of organization of "The realms of necessity". But in the passage above what Marx says about freedom comes down to "Instead of being ruled by the production process as by a blind power, men will bring it under their common control. But that is to interpret the dissolution of social master-slave relationships on the lines of the "mastery", or conquest, of nature." (Wellmer, p.117)

Marx did not elucidate on "common control" in terms of the ending of dominance and submission relationships and the establishment of a democracy which would deal with amongst other matters the discussion of what were to be the necessary features of the production process including: whether technology and machinery were to stand over the human workers, whether work was to be automated or returned to the realm of a more direct exercise of human creative capacity, whether factories were to be decentralized to provide mere "face to face" democracy (see articles on technology by M. Bookchin in 'Post-Scarcity Anarchism'), how fast was the pace to be, how would clerical work be dealt with etc. etc. - in short, the numerous questions from the national to the local level which involved the creation of enjoyable work and enjoyable work relationships.

For Marx freedom in the realm of necessity can only be the recognition of necessity and this "means the installation of the 'general intellect' as an automatic control system" dedicated to the further and further rationalization of work and the constant decrease in labour time, not only the denial of democracy but the denial of co-operative, puposive activity and the exercise of the real need to work. All the forces of capitalist production would be taken over and developed in the same direction they were proceeding under capitalism until blocked by the contradiction with the relations of production.

Freedom would be "the realm of private latitude" and it would be "an adequate condition for emancipation if the revolutionary proletariat (or its advance guard) captured the control centre from which the degree of technico-organizational rationality necessary for industrial society could be exerted in the overall planning of the production process; since the question of what was necessary would be scientifically determinable, it would be decided by the new technocrats who would only be managing things. The freedom of individuals living in this kind of society would not be freedom of autonomous individuals in humanized history, but the free time of 'domesticated farm animals' and 'laboratory rats' in the 'controlled life system of a controlled environment'." (Wellmer, p.118)

The Marx Menagerie??



In view of the consequences for revolutionary aims and activity that have flowed from marxist theory it is a relief to hear that some in the tendancy have rejected the base - superstructure model. However this provides little comfort because the tendancy has gradually adopted more and more of the shibboleths of the left. The failure of the SMG to revolutionise the proletariat in Brisbane and of the libertarian movement to provide a strategic yellow brick road with revolution at the end has been a disappointment for some. No one can be happy with the state of the libertarian movement in Oz. But the tendancy has rejected all the genuinely unique features of libertarianism which represent the lessons of history that the self-mystified left has failed to learn. Marxist or non-marxist they have embraced all the trappings of marxist strategy as represented in the practice of the traditional left. The call to give up the illusion at the base of marxist theory is the call to give up the superstructure which has been built on this base.

There is not much value in making out of character ahistorical distinctions between the "many marxisms" - Marx, Lenin, Korsch, Lukacs etc. These must not be understood as an eclectic menagerie or a curiosity shop from which one can

make an individual selection to suit one's taste or the times. Instead they must be rooted in the material conditions in which they arose. They reflect the real problems posed to the limitations of marxism by events such as the defeat of revolutions in advanced capitalist countries and their repeated success starting in 1917 in backward countries, the rise of fascism, the growth of Stalinism and its counter-revolutionary role, the rising material standards in the capitalist nations, the integration of the working class, capitalism's continuing development of the productive forces, the militancy of non-proletarian strata, the importance and independence of the state etc. Scientific marxism not only failed to explain any of this but had, as a theory for the proletariat actually stood in its historical representation as an ideology for the power of a new thoroughly oppressive class against the proletariat. Marx towers partly because of the elevation provided by the U.S.S.R. and all its works. But this elevation is at the same time his most absolute abasement. Marxism has become a chain. It has lost utterly all its claims to specialness and can no longer claim "to monopolize revolutionary initiative as well as theoretical and practical direction". (Korsch) Kronstadt is to scientific marxism as Hiroshima is to physics.

The paths open to marxism are many only in the sense that some are more prepared than others on any particular issue to compromise in marxism's continuing battle with reality. (e.g. Althusserians versus Miliband on the state.) Basically there are only three ways to resolve the problems however. One is to embrace objectivism. This is in fact the majority trend since marxist-leninists (whether Stalinists, maoists, Trotskyites) all claim to be faithful to scientific marxism. Secondly a humanist marxism can be adopted by remaining uncritical of historical materialism and abstracting elements of humanist criticism in Marx (which, contrary to Althusser et. al., remained throughout his work but were subsumed by science and economics) from their theoretical context and from the history of marxism itself (e.g. Fromm). This is only partly separate from the third - Hegelian marxism. This marxism emphasizes consciousness over economics. They saw that capitalist culture contained elements for a critique of capitalism. They emphasize will over laws and spontaneity over party. At one extreme they merely represent an adventurist and uncompromising Leninism (even remaining embedded in Stalinism) at the other (Korsch) they have moved to anarchism. As was suggested they constitute a historical response. "In moving from scientific to a critical socialism the socialist critique of modern society correspondingly moved from condemnation of capitalism's economic exploitation to a denunciation of its sociological dehumanization; alienation and reification (an emphasis) rooted in capitalism's increasingly gross national product, in the keynesian control of the business cycle and in the improving standard of living among the working class. The movement toward a Hegelian Marxism thus, has in part resulted from an effort to reformulate Marxism so that it would be consistent with the experience of everyday life under capitalism." ('For Sociology' p.441 Gouldner). What is noticeable about this trend is that it remains unacademic except in Eastern Europe where involvement results from the fact that the mere statement of such ideas leads to harassment. The Hegelians set out to a finer and finer honing of the tools theory. (In the Frankfurt School academism lead to conservatism eventually.) Taking Heller as an example (she belongs to the Budapest school of followers of Lukacs) she is only able to resucitate consciousness within historical materialism. At the conclusion of a discussion which attempts objectivism she finally locates 'the Ought', that is values and ideals, within a typically objectivist framework. "Only the struggle of the collective subject is capable of bringing

about the new society: the revolution is radical, 'from the root', and total. But the collective Ought arises necessarily, for the 'social body' of capitalism itself 'necessarily' generates the radical needs and their bearers." (p.86) This could be interpreted merely to mean that revolutionary consciousness does not come from outside the oppressed class. But in the context of the previous discussion of marxists needs theory it ultimately must mean preordination which, as has been argued, must deny the revolutionary project of conscious creation of socialist ways of relating in organized opposition to capitalism. Indeed in the same passage Heller says that the creation of the collective Ought by capitalism leads to communism 'no less necessarily' than in Marx's statements likening his historical laws to natural laws.

Hegelian marxists who would place an emphasis on subjectivism and consciousness must eventually confront the real subject and the home of consciousness - the human psyche in which case they must fight out the complexities of an hegelian-marxist system (for they still seek a total explanation) on the territory of psychoanalysis, psychology, social psychology (including social character) and human nature. Their first problem is that they are embedded in the sterile marxist theory of ideas as mere epiphenomena of economic conditions, which even when this model is abandoned, leaves them with sterile source material (this question of ideas was to be discussed but time has prevented this. Refer to the discussion in response to the marxists in R.S.P.) The second problem is that the idea of human nature is even more abhorrent to them than it is to the scientific marxists who have toyed with instinctivism and who, as was mentioned, have recognised in dogmatic Freudianism (especially of the French school of Lacan) a relevance to marxism, seeing in Freud's instinctivism a 'scientific' core. (see page 8 of P.K.'s paper where a need to defend the original Freud from Fromm's corruption is evidenced.) The Hegelians on the other hand, would only make use of Freud as a kind of symbolic source. Marcuse serves as an example of the case of symbolical-philosophical Freudianism (see the Crisis of Psychoanalysis p.27 onwards.) (It is true, however, that Fromm was invited to the Frankfurt school to open them up to psychoanalysis and his influence is seen in Adorno's work on the authoritarian personality.) Gouldner has a comment on this "Behind the Hegelianizers strees on the importance of consciousness, on the subjection of the world to consciousness, that is to say, on the 'identity of the subject-object', there is an abiding suspicion of nature, distrust of alienness and of otherness, partly because it is an autonomous thing, vis-a-vis man. There is a desire to define even 'nature' as a product of man, an impulse to reduce it to a socially shaped concept, to see it only as part of 'social reality'. Anything autonomous, anything 'other', anything not a part of ourselves, anything not controllable by ourselves, from this perspective, is to be rejected. The impulse is to eliminate anything in the world that is not us, or not totally dependent on us. What the Hegelianizers want is a world in which people will control and indeed dominate the universe. They are, in short, proponents of a humanistic imperialism; they must therefore be the foe of the natural even in human beings. For the 'natural' is intrinsically that which has its own laws, spontaneous and autonomous; it is not us but another." (p.420)

As will be seen below Gouldner's description is not always applicable. From our point of view what is important is that it reveals the absence of certain concepts. The viewpoint clearly derives from Marx, whose belief in the 'ultimately unlimited potency' of humanity is exemplified by his committment to unlimited development of the forces of production, unqualified acceptance of technical intelligence (see 'The Relevance of Anarchism to Modern Society' for some insightful comments by

Bakunin on this issue) and his belief in the conquest of nature.

In fact one attack on these aspects of Marx actually comes from the critical theory of Horkheimer and Adorno (see Wellmer, last essay) and another from Marcuse. Nevertheless the trend is strong in Hegelian marxism and also is represented in the second generation critical theorists by Habermas. Fromm should also be mentioned here for although his psychoanalysis based on universal needs excludes him from the above description and although his description of the existential 'separation' from nature and of the break of 'primary ties' are accepted he maintains an allegiance to the concept of values as the basis for a 'freedom from nature,' There should also be a 'freedom to' with nature.

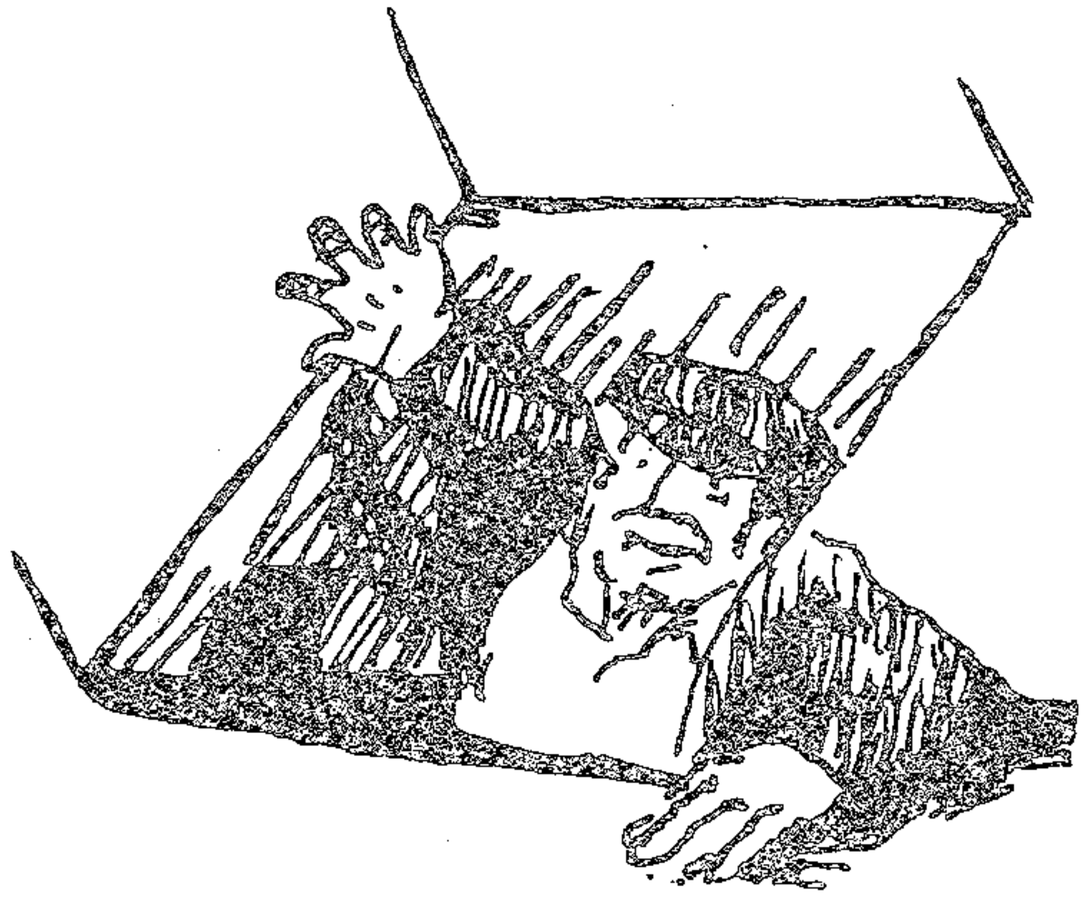
The critique of the conquest of nature would first point out that the primacy granted to technical reason for this task has been one of the most powerful forces operating against ourselves that was ever set to work and for it we stand in danger of the most absolute barbarism of nuclear catastrophe or at least the final centralization of society for the purpose of the final act of 'independence' from nature in production of power by almost self-perpetuating nuclear processes. (This is also of interest for contrary to marxism it shows the ability of capitalist society to develop the productive forces and to crush all else for this purpose, the only impediment being not the relations of production but the appeal to ideas, values and alternatives by people.) In general the subjection of human development to economic development or progress against nature has subjected millions of people to the cold cruelty of science and technical intelligence (time and motion, production lines, pollution etc). The subjection of nature became the subjection of people. The denial of humanity in nature led to a denial of nature in humanity, the treatment of people as tools. Furthermore the critique would recognize that human efforts have often been a destructive interference in natural process and have rebounded against ourselves. The aim must be to end the embattled separation which is an illusion and operate according to ecological principles, recognizing that life is an endless give and take between the earth and all its creatures. (see Telos 22, 'From Critical Theory to Critical Ecology') Not mastery by harmony, not conquering, but integration, on the other hand not worship but rationality, not pantheism but ecology.

In conclusion it should be recognised that the noose of marxism once on is difficult to loosen. There will be marxist libertarians but they will have made the break with the strategic encumbrances of the system which means many decisive breaks with the ideas. Marx has to be recognized as another source not the 'light and the way'. As Solidarity said, "The revolutionaries have only interpreted Marx, in various ways; the point however, is to change them."

Since cute games have been played with holy grails and demonologies it should be remembered that marxism has a fully developed world-wide and rigid demonology equal to catholocism against which the holy grail of class analysis from which master drank deeply is sought. Even marxists barely conversant with the texts are skilled in liturgical responses. Their statements immediately qualify as an 'analysis'. Just as quickly yours are condemned for lacking the quality of 'class analysis'. For such marxists to glorify a few observations and facts (or a few distortions and fiction) with the honorific 'class analysis' is to flood them with a heavenly light of clarity and wisdom and surround them with a massed cherubic choir of naked pink-winged marxes and a thousand tempting engelic seraphim. But to have one's viewpoint damned with the curse 'that's not a class analysis' is to be hurled down, down into the black and vacant chaos of bourgeois idealism and

stew in the burning lake of ahistoricism, existentialism, psychologism and voluntrism from which the only political palace which can be raised is the pandemonium of demonic moralistic humanism.

Libertarian Communist Organisation and Activity



How should we act? Obviously we are limited in our answers by our experience and our experience is conditioned by the situation in Australia. In a situation where struggle has not taken on the character of the self-activity and developing independence of people we have been denied the role of dissemination of practical examples from one struggle to another, though this is also denied by the fact that the libertarian movement is not developed nationally. This does not mean that until we can do this we can only choose between leninism and inaction. In many ways, the period of protest around the sacking of the Whitlam government was paradigmatic of our position in Australia. It was much sound and fury signifying nothing. The people were involved in a brief upsurge of militant defence of the organizations to which they are normally related in a passive and apathetic way. In this situation there were merely 'actively passive', they were not questioning any of their bosses, not even Fraser, except perhaps Kerr. It was wisely said at the protest march, "Revolutionaries to the rear, this is not your day." Even so we were able to put forward a sensible presence for libertarian ideas. The two leaflets at the time are admirable in recognizing the circumstances yet putting forward hard truths about the ALP and capitalism. The genuine preference for the ALP was stated but not by one word or gesture did we add to the mystification, idolatry, parliamentary blather and general demagogic social democratic hooha of the occasion. We would have cause for shame today if we had given away our libertarianism and kowtowed along with the liberals and leninists to the ALP and argued from the myths of capitalism. We would also have cause for regret if we had been sectarian, for though in this situation passivity was unchallenged in its essence, when real attempts at autonomous action show themselves the bureaucratic, repressive

response will create awareness of the division between themselves and the people. Even in November, 1975 some elements of the protests had to be cooled down with soothing words by Hawke et. al. who said, "It's OK, leave it to us, vote for us, support our campaign." We drew attention to this in our leaflet. We have room to manoeuvre in this society without giving up the hope to spread libertarian analysis and alternatives. This is circumlocution or worse, propagandizing around what we think people will accept from us because it does not challenge them or worse still engaging in the manipulative charade of advocating demands that we think capitalism will be unable to grant and thereby lead people into exemplary situations. We should support demands for reform which capitalism can grant because we want people better. We do not follow the line that the worse suffering the better for us. When we think capitalism cannot or will not grant a reform we should say why we think so and advocate a revolutionary perspective. If we support the ALP it should be because it offers genuine improvements. In the U.K. the Labour Party does not offer any improvements and it would probably be the most wise not to support it at all (see Solidarity editorial Vol. 8, No. 6, April). We should not follow the disgusting opportunism of the communist parties who, in their periods of militancy, would argue 'we support the social democrats, like a rope supports a hanging man'.

If the basis for revolutionary consciousness is the preordained developments of capitalism, no demand need be made for consistency of means and ends, since the end is "value free". There is no need to define or create socialism in order to act in the way most likely to produce it. There is no need to try to determine where we are going. Libertarians see a libertarian revolution as based on the condition that people's deeds will not be generated by a mechanism but proceed from their own decision — not be made by history but make it. That a revolution can occur is objective, that it will is subjective (this is to speak in terms of a questionable dichotomy).

Wellmer has detected a gap between Marx's philosophy of history and his criticism — this criticism being designed to further the practical necessity (need for) libertarian activity. Where this gap is revealed "Marx's argument would seem through some tacit compulsion to be dually grounded, because only thus can the utopian goal be read in the lines of technical-economic necessity. In reality, the historico-philosophical scheme of interpretation, which is dominated by the logic of production, no longer admits of a formulation of problems of the social system in which questions of survival also appear as questions of the "good life . . . because the existentially necessary (i.e. historically inevitable) new order of production is made equivalent to the commonwealth of freedom, the objective possibility and the practical necessity of enlightening the proletariat about its social situation become the historical (existential) necessity that the proletariat comprehends its own situation, which in the end turns into the necessity that the proletariat will actually achieve the revolutionary goal — the building of the classless society — already "irrevocably ordained" in its present situation". (pp 105-106).

The belief that the coming of classless society is inevitable destroys the activity of actually building the classless society now. The idea that a process must produce the alternative, including the consciousness necessary for that alternative, leads to an abandonment of the centrality of the notion that personal change, active comprehension and collective effort around defined aims, applying recognised values are the basis for attaining classless society.

What then is the objective basis which has enabled the masses to formulate socialist revolutionary ends? They have been indicated in this paper as being based in the struggle of human needs for realization, the process of individuation, the spread of Enlightment ideas that society should be based on reason, the primacy of doctrines of rights and justice and in the central anatagonisms of capitalism located in its demand and need for people's initiative, involvement and creativity, while it follows a development which constantly denies them and denies them in ever new areas of interaction.

The form of Castoriadis' presentation of the contradictions in production obviously echoes marxism and this paper has critized it for retaining the notion that a capitalist process produces the needs requisite for socialism. An alternative has been indicated. But Castoriadis did not maintain the fatalism of marxism whereby what was wanted was inevitable.

"The struggle of the working class against capitalism is neither purely 'economic' nor purely 'political'. It is a struggle which starts at the point of production. Its object is not merely more wages...Nor is it explicitly concerned with the general reorganization of society. Its importance lies in the fact that the struggle in production attacks, every hour of the day, the fundamental reality of capitalism. For what it challenges are the relations of production in the capitalist factory i.e. the relations of groups of men to other groups of men in the process of producing wealth...Whatever their wage level, workers are constantly fighting against methods of production which daily increase the inhuman aspects of work. This struggle is not merely a defensive one, aimed at limiting exploitation. Production must somehow be carried on. While acting together against the bureaucratic apparatus of management, workers create amongst themselves, a certain solidarity and discipline. They carry on a form of co-operation at work which in spirit and substance comes hourly into conflict with the everyday rules and regulations of the capitalist factory...(and) seek to impose a form of workers management...these new relations often challenge the capitalist morality...with a new morality based on solidarity and equality." It is from this bases that the socialist conception of society could be formed in the revolutionary upsurges but it is also behind the creation of parties and unions. "It is quite false to proclaim that the working class 'is only capable of achieving a trade union consciousness'. In Germany the workers started by creating mass political organizations from which trade unions subsequently developed. When trade unions were first formed in the Latin countries they were not merley 'economic' organizations struggling for limited ends. They proclaimed as their objective nothing less than the abolition of the wage system... Workers recognized their own fundamental needs in the programme of these organizations. This state of affairs persisted during a whole period of history. This period is now drawing to a close, both objectively and in the minds of the workers, and this despite the attempts of self-styled revolutionaries to keep alive slowly dying traditional organizations." (Working Class Consciousness)

What is important here is that it is the creations of the class struggle which provide a basis for the further development of that struggle. The contradiction in production keeps alive the human conditions for expanded and fully conscious resistance. None of the processes of capitalism "has a positive meaning by itself, i.e. independently of the actions of men. All these factors are contradictory or ambivalent. Proletarianization is accompanied by hierarchy. Modern technical know-how, which could provide immense resources to a revolutionary power, in the meantime provides our rulers with opportunities for violence and subtle control over society surpassing anything imagined hitherto. The diffusion of

technical knowledge goes hand in hand with a frightening 'neo-illiteracy'. Increasing consumption appeared, for a whole period, a possible solution to the exploited. The crisis in values has made capitalist society almost unmanageable. But in this crisis, the values, ideas and organizations of the proletariat have themselves been corrupted. In brief: revolution took place in Russia in 1917 - but no revolutions have taken place in any advanced countries since. Revolutionaries do not posses a capital in the Bank of History which accumulates at compound interest.

If there is then a maturing of the conditions for socialism, it can never be a maturing of 'objective conditions'. These have no meaning in themselves. This maturation can only be a progression of another nature, which one perceives when one looks at the succession of proletarian revolutions historically. It is the upward line which connects the high points of proletarian action: 1848, 1871, 1917, 1956. The vague demands of the Paris workers of 1848 for economic and social justice became, by 1917, the expropriation of the capitalist class. This correct but negative objective was clarified through subsequent experience. In the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, it was replaced by the positive demand that the producers dominate production (i.e. workers' management). The form of proletarian power was likewise made more precise: from the Commune of 1871 to the Soviets of 1917 - and from these to the network of factory councils that spread throughout Hungary in 1956.

There is therefore a development, often interrupted and contradictory, but nevertheless essentially positive. This process is not 'objective': it is merely the development of the incarnate meaning of workers' actions. But neither is the process simply a 'subjective' one (i.e. simply the development and education of workers through the incidents of their own activity). No experience leaves a sediment in the working class, in a real sense. There is no 'proletarian memory' because there is no such thing as 'proletarian consciousness' except in a metaphorical sense. In the periods between two revolutionary upheavals, one could search in vain, even among individual workers, for a clear memory of previous events, for a conscious elaboration of ideas, for a new definition of objectives and methods. One will generally find only confusion, apathy, and often the resurgence of reactionary ideas.

How then does this progression occur? In part, admittedly, through a kind of apprenticeship, through the conscious experience of certain elements - the revolutionaries - whose role we are not seeking to minimize. This experience of an advanced minority tends to act as a catalyst, at the beginning of each new phase of working class advance. It can have little lasting effect, however, if at the same time large sections of the working class have not become more ready to accept new conclusions, if they have not prepared themselves for a new and higher phase of activity.

What does this 'preparation' mean? In the intervening period, both as a result of its previous revolutionary struggle and of its daily activity, the working class has transformed society, and thereby also the terms of the problem. At each moment proletarian experience is derived from contemporary reality and not from the lessons of the past. But present reality contains within it the results of past actions. It is itself the result of preceding stages of the class struggle. The reality to be transformed always consists of the partially achieved objectives of previous struggles and of those which in the process of being achieved have changed their meaning; of the victories and defeats, of the truths and errors of yesterday. In

transforming social reality through its incessant action the working class at the same time transforms the conditions of its later consciousness. It so to speak compels itself to carry its own struggle to a higher level at the next stage." (Modern Capitalism and Revolution)

"There is no magic in this intrinsic dialectic of the class struggle. It does not reveal a pre-established harmony. It does not prove that communism has been assigned by a revolutionary providence as the objective of human history. It only means that, as long as the solutions which the working class seeks to its problems are false, partial or insufficient, the problem remains. And all new attempts to solve the problem must mean a struggle against the old solutions and what they have become in practice.

Let us give a few examples. The working class may seek to improve its conditions through reformism. If it then begins to struggle again (once reformist objectives have been fulfilled, as in contemporary society) it can only be to go beyond reformism, since reformism has now become an integral part of the reality to be superseded. Or the workers may try to emancipate themselves by giving power to 'their' Party, that is in the final analysis to a bureaucracy. The very achievement of this objective will drive the workers to surpass and fight it (as they did in Hungary in 1956) for they will come to see in the power of the bureaucracy another form of exploitation." (Modern Capitalism and Revolution)

Another example is the achievement of constantly higher real wages, which forced the capitalists to see the advantages of a big internal consumer market, and which inaugurated the consumer society allowing the illusion of consumption as satisfaction to dominate people's strivings and values and has created a situation where any struggle for broad ends or even half-way revolutionary aims must conceive of satisfaction outside the realm of consumer goods and look for it in the realm of human relatedness and an ecological ordering of society.

"As long as society remains based on exploitation the constant conflict between the social objective (the liberation of man) and the transient formations through which the workers thought they could achieve their end will drive history forward. The maturing of the conditions of socialism is thus the accumulation of the objective conditions of an adequate consciousness. This accumulation is itself the product of the actions of the working class. The process is historic. The subjective is only of importance inasmuch as it modifies what is objective. And what is objective only acquires the meaning which the actions of the subjective confer to it in a given context and connection." (Modern Capitalism and Revolution p.85-87)

It follows from the above that we reject completely the return of the tendancy to support for nationalization etc. which represents in this view an alignment with the past achievements of class struggle which are now in opposition to the people who created them. We must do all we can to assist the process of confrontation of the people with the repressive content of these creations. We do not need to repeat here the basic viewpoint of libertarians on revolutionary activity and the role of the revolutionary organization since this can be found in pamphlets such as 'The Meaning of Socialism', 'The Crisis of Modern Society', As We Don't See It', "'Workers' Councils, not Parliamentary Democracy"', the last chapters of 'Modern Capitalism and Revolution' and especially 'Socialism and Barbarism'. Some of this is outdated. More importantly these statements constitute the first principles only. We feel that we are a little ahead on some aspects of intervention and this is partly summed up in our Strategy and Tactics statement. Furthermore some libertarians remain spontaneists who imagine that socialism must be a pure 'defensive reflex' rather than a conscious creation (see

'The New Movement' Solidarity). They have much in common with objectivism for thought they do not refer to laws of history they have a belief that somehow 'something is bound to turn up'. They are also similar in their denial of concrete activity directed to propagate libertarian ideas and organization now. They must rely on a type of faith in the purity of people's impulses. Revolution will not be an ordered, incremental process and will be marked in the end by a massive revolutionization in society but to the extent that the revolution is dominated by spontaneity and rebelliousness and marked by immature and half formed ideas and organization then to that same extent will it be in danger of collapse from the first external danger or internal dispute or confusion of purpose. The collapse of capitalism will not ensure that it will be replaced by a non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian classless society. It follows that libertarian organizations should be dedicated to the uncompromising advocacy of the self-activity of the masses, to their own self-institutionalization of socialism, to their organizational and ideational autonomy and to their surpassing of the need for our existence by the acceptance of an unbreakable committment to their own power rejecting all parties. We do not wish to win influence by demonstrating our ability, as individuals or cells, for a superior effectiveness in pushing forward, on behalf of people, their demands - that is, to be the best militants. It would be more true to say that our task is to be the most accurate revolutionaries. Our function is to demystify not represent. The tasks of leninists is to represent. (a worthwhile account of the debates within libertarianism can be found in R.Gombin 'The Origin of Modern Leftism' Penguin). It is a long way from this to the position of one spontaneist group in Belgium which wrote to us that they were mere pebbles on the beach of time and their only function was to serve the workers. There is a denial of the role of influence and deliberate presentation of ideas aimed to change situations. Spontaneism seems to have lost ground completely amongst libertarians (though some members of one section of the S.M.G. urged it against the marxists at a recent meeting). Even the mild form which limited the activity of the libertarian group to publishing is passing (witness Solidarity editorial Vol. 8 No. 6 April, 1977).

As was said by P.K. we do not have all the answers. We believe anyone who thinks leninism provided the answers is blind to history. We do not wish to adopt the kind of strategic posturing of the left which becomes all the more intense the more powerless is the group. No section of society is the repository of the revolutionary project. The idea that this was the proletariat "has become a sort of incantation which allows the C.P., in the one hand, to pose as the party which speaks 'in the name' of the working class, and allows left and far-left groupuscles, on the other hand, to mystify themselves, repeating 'we are ten, but we are the potential party of the proletariat' or 'we are by right that proletariat which still does not know itself'." (Telos 23 p.151) No one has the right to aspire to be a leader simply because he thinks he has a better understanding of events than other people. We do not need to emphasize that we believe leadership destroys initiative. With these qualifications we reaffirm our committment to the first principles of libertarian activity and organization.

A few fresh examples of the kind of points libertarians have been making might be helpful here. The Solidarity editorial points to a number of recent nationalizations that resulted from struggle. The significant feature of these was that the state presided over the even more rapid achievement of management's aims including lay-offs with less resistance. As for compulsory trade unionism it is amazing to argue such undemocratic nonsense in Australia where this aim was

mostly achieved for the purpose of integrating workers into arbitration. In fact the libertarian upsurges in Europe and the U.S.A. have not been determined by unionization and it is well known that the union has been the enemy. Australia and West-Germany with high unionization are low on self-activity. When compulsory unionism is combined with the demand for union control of hire and fire the bureaucrats have been handed the best blacklisting weapon possible. From the Solidarity editorial - in a recent strike at "The Times", "the strikers were simply expelled from the union by 'their' officials. The implications are quite clear : 'Not only do the print unions have a closed shop but it is they, rather than the employers, who select people for jobs'. (The Observer) Expulsion from the union meant not only losing a job, it meant that one could never get another one in the print. The strike at "The Times" collapsed." The latest Solidarity Motor Bulletin (No.6) indicates the opposition between shop stewards and workers that has grown up - the stewards act as conveyor belts to the T.U.B.'s and what are called 'senior shop stewards' seem to act no differently than other officials. Another example of the logic of taking union positions comes from Italy. (Intercontinental Press, May 16, p.552) Il Manifesto was a group expelled from the P.C.I. for leftism and as the POUP they have worked in unions. What was their fate? "I could cite examples of members of this party giving reports in plant assemblies in the name of bureaucratic leaderships, or supporting bureaucratic expulsions of revolutionaries....at the Alfa Romeo plant in Milan upon breaking into the director's office, the workers found Lettieri, a leader of the metal workers and a member of the POUP 'leftwing' in the men's room in the company of other bureaucrats. These unlucky individuals were hiding because they were in the process of negotiating behind the backs of the workers." Since there are signs of a regression here an example of third worldist issues is called for. The Cubans have long supported the 'progressive' struggle of the Eritrean liberation movement against Ethiopian imperialism". Now they are supporting the Ethiopian army's latest campaign. The Eritreans are supported by reactionary Saudi Arabia. Who is to be supported? Finally we will simply repeat Solidarity (same issue) quoting a conservative commentator on the planned industrial democracy reforms in the U.K. "No sensible discussion of the Bullock report can afford to lose sight of this central theme: that it is about ways and means of making workers more malleable and less rebellious, more disciplined and less free, by grafting the waxing authority of Socialist trade unionism onto the waning authority of capitalist management." For those who need it we hope these serve as reminders that we must refuse any invitation to bolster the illusions of the left.

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